



Mercer County

DOAS13AAA036

**MISSION STATEMENT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AAA****Include Mission Statement of the AAA:**

The Mercer County Office on Aging dedicates its energies to responding to the varying and changing needs of its 60 years and older adult population. As the county becomes a fully functioning Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC), the importance of collaborative efforts with other government, public and private agencies enhances our ability to assess needs, advocate, increase choice and support the dignity of older adults, those living with disabilities and their caregivers. Mercer County residents express their desire to stay as independent as possible in housing and communities of their choice. The Office on Aging works to plan, develop, strengthen and promote a strong network of home and community based programs and services that will support this desire.



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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE AAA - Continued****Include Executive Summary of the AAA:**

## Purpose of Area Plan

The Area Plan offers a blueprint of Mercer County's demographics and population and includes an analysis of the needs and existing services within the county and a comprehensive plan for the delivery of services to older people. Although written in black and white, there are many aspects that are ever-changing that require astute observation and involvement of Mercer County leadership and specifically the Office on Aging.

## Overview

The Mercer County Office on Aging maintains its allegiance to the Older American's Act as the federally designated body within government to receive grants and administer contracts for building a comprehensive system of services for older people in their planning and service area.

What does Mercer County look like in 2012 and what are the expectations in years 2013-2014? Released in July of 2012, the Greater Mercer Public Health Partnership (GMPHP) is a collaboration of 4 hospitals, 8 local health departments and United Way.

This group explored a range of health behaviors and outcomes, social and economic issues, and gaps and strengths of existing resources and services. What impact will the burgeoning aging population, those living with disabilities and their caregivers have on service access and availability but also for social opportunities to stay engaged in their communities of choice. Some of the notable highlights include:

- \*The senior population 65 years old and older is expected to increase at a faster rate in the next two decades than the population overall.
- \*Heart disease remains the leading cause for adults while fractures overwhelmingly are a major cause for elder hospitalization.
- \*Oral health emerged as a major need.
- \*Supply of family physicians and long-term facilities for aging population.
- \*Compliments the value of local senior centers.
- \*Emphasizes the importance of walkability in communities; but points out the lack of public transportation in communities for older adults.

## Mission Statement and Executive Summary of the AAA

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\*Housing needs, affordable prescription drugs and high cost of living emerged as important matters to address

The aforementioned report states seniors aged 65 and older are considered the fastest-growing age cohort in Mercer County. This group is expected to increase in population by 49% from 46,347 seniors in 2010 to a projected 69,200 in 2028.

A key indicator for making ends meet in Mercer County is supported by the 2011 Elder Economic Security Index information that profiles seniors living on the edge of poverty. It is a more realistic view of life for Mercer's older adults than the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) that looks only at the cost of food when establishing baseline formulas for eligibility criteria for assistance. 4.7% (1,162) of Mercer County's older adults live below the poverty level and therefore qualify for assistance as their yearly income does not exceed \$1. However, when one factors in the cost to make ends meet by looking at costs for housing, food, transportation, health care and some other miscellaneous expenses, a Mercer County individual owner of their home needs \$2,250/month or \$25,800 per year to make ends meet. 34.2% (8,416) of Mercer's elders are above the poverty level but below the elder index and do not qualify for federal assistance programs. Many are on a fixed income. The programs and services that the Mercer County Office on Aging provides are the services that help seniors make ends meet - vital to their existence.

These programs include: meals at home, including weekend meals; social and recreational activities; care management; telephone reassurance; a senior well-being education and health service; friendly visiting; respite; adult protective services; congregate nutrition programs; legal assistance and education; home health care services; and transportation. Caregiver support is crucial in supporting those that are Mercer County's hidden heroes through respite, caregiver education and support group opportunities.

Access to current, complete and helpful information remains the number one

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request from our constituents. It is imperative that we update our resources and are positioned to soon republish our Directory of Services and give a face lift to the website. With the availability of the ADRC website, there is far more availability of information for the general public. In 2013 we will work to incorporate it into all the materials that we offer the public.

2012 is a game changing year for the Office on Aging. With the Aging and Disability Resource Connection in its final stage of development and with the Comprehensive Waiver in pre-approval stage, moving forward with protocols and processes for a smooth transition to a new business model took some interesting turns. Mercer County enjoys a good working relationship with the Office for Disability Services and a tepid relationship with the Board of Social Services. Another key partner in the ADRC will be the Progressive Center for Independent living. More formal protocol for referrals and for streamlining people towards the programs and services that they need is imperative to finalize. This will remain a priority into 2013, with the plan to add partners to strengthen the ADRC. Key to leading the path to a fully-functional ADRC will be the determination of how to partner with Jewish and Children's Family Services as they manage a distinct program that mimics the ADRC model through their agency.

The Comprehensive Waiver groups all of the benefit programs for people of all ages under "one roof." Under the direction of Department of Human Services, the Division of Aging Services has found a new home. With Medicaid steering the move from county and community-based care management to the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), there will be additional ease in the direction of and funding for services that are most likely to assist the older population, those living with disabilities and their caregivers. Standardizing the protocol for screening New Jersey's older population will be practice in the years to come, using the tool "Screen for Community Services" that begins one journey towards long-term care supports and services.

The SAMS database will increasingly become the "tool of the trade" for the Office on Aging. It not only will be able to figuratively give us a snapshot of

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Mercer County but additionally allow outreach to all people by sharing resources, regardless of their age, income or asset security or their functional level. The SAMS database will allow communication between agencies and allow access to resources at one's fingertips.

Mercer County boasts their dedication to congregate meals settings for our seniors. With 12 nutrition sites, food for the body and for the soul, a nutritionally balanced meal is served to over 700 seniors on a daily basis. From the largest site, the Hamilton Township Senior Center, to the smaller sites in the City of Trenton, seniors get a hot meal and an opportunity to meet others from their communities for socialization and sometimes recreational opportunities.

The Mercer County Office on Aging partnered with the Office for Disabilities to host a first-of-its-kind conference that highlighted concerns of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgendered community. Held at Mercer County Community College over 60 attendees learned of the issues that confront the LGBT community, a community that is often hidden and unrecognized especially as they age. This is a conference that has received County support and will be repeated.

**Target Population - Targeting Goals**

TARGET POPULATION	A	B	C	D	E	F	G (GOAL)
	Enter census data for 2010				Estimate, based on average historical level of service		
	Actual # County Population 60+	Actual % County Population 60+	Actual # County Population 60+ with income Below Poverty	Actual % County Population 60+ with income Below Poverty	Estimated # County Population 60+ AAA will serve in the current Area Plan Contract Grant Year	Estimated % County Population 60+ AAA will serve in the current Area Plan Contract Grant Year	Estimated % County Population 60+ AAA will serve in the Next Area Plan Contract Grant Year
<b>ETHNICITY</b>	65637				12807		
Hispanic or Latino	3186	5 %	0	0 %	411	13 %	14 %
Non-Hispanic or Latino	62451	95 %	0	0 %	12396	20 %	29 %
<b>RACE OR ETHNICITY</b>	65637				12807		
White (Alone) Non-Hispanic	48137	73 %	0	0 %	7677	16 %	26 %
White (Alone) - Hispanic	3186	5 %	0	0 %	411	13 %	14 %
American Indian or Alaskan Native (Alone)	75	0 %	0	0 %	26	35 %	21 %
Asian (Alone)	3589	5 %	0	0 %	453	13 %	14 %
Black (Alone) or African-American (Alone)	10158	15 %	0	0 %	4041	40 %	51 %
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8	0 %	0	0 %	3	38 %	40 %
Persons: 2 or more races	446	1 %	0	0 %	158	35 %	36 %
Other Ethnic Group(s) :	38	0 %	0	0 %	38	100 %	100 %
<b>TOTAL COUNTY POPULATION 60+</b>	65637				12807		

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### PRIORITIES UPDATE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year.

Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

Evidence Based Health Promotion

**Priority Description:**

The OOA/ADRC takes a proactive approach in all we do to promote health and wellness (h/w)

Participation in local programing the supports h/w includes:

- \* Involvement in Falls Prevention Awareness Day with Robert Wood Johnson Health and Wellness Center
- \* Participates in Health Fairs with local churches, community organization
- \* Membership in County-wide Network Connections meetings whereby local h/w professionals present topical informaiton that is readily usable by older population
- \* Nutrition program dedicates one meal per month at one of the local nutrition sites as Healthy Meal Day; nutritionist visits and describes the importance of each meal item; speakers are scheduled at each site presenting topical h/w info; gifts/giveaways to participants are always chosen to reflect h/w theme.

Grantees from Henry J. Austin, Interfaith Caregivers and Greater Trenton Behavioral Health are in the community offering the Health Ease program, Healthy Bones, and Caregiver education respectively. The office promotes through our outreach and through I&A. There is plenty of opportunity to expand in the years ahead. We envision the ability to assist in increased visibiliy of the programs offered publically. Our local hospitals are exceptional in their offerings of programs.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

Nutrition

**Priority Description:**

Creative Initiatives to maintain or improve the level of nutrition services:

- \* Host special days to attract membership. Thematic days throughout the year bring in new patrons. We held a bring a friend to lunch day, whereby the meal was "free" for the friend who joined the participant.
- \* The very active nutrition council rotates their meetings so they each see the other sites and are generally well-informed about the offerings in Mercer County.
- \* Special events like a Pool Tournament and Bocce Tournament are held to entice new attendees, especially more male participants.
- \* Activities, both recreational and social must be in place to attract the younger senior; this is apparent at the best attended sites.
- \* Much thought goes into the planning for the use of shelf stable meals for congregate meal site distribution.
- \* Meals on Wheels programs utilize opportunities to enhance communication with the participants on healthy eating. This remains a challenges as the homebound are an important group on which to focus. At Christmastime 2011, the OOA was able to connect a group of employees from a local business to "adopt" the folks from the Meals on Wheels Trenton/Ewing program and provide nightwear (nightclothes, slippers, socks and robes) to all their participants. A much welcomed gesture!
- \* Mercer County went out for bid this year for the congregate meal program and again are pleased that Whitson's Caterers are our provider for meals once again. Participants are pleased. Whitson's is most accomodating and offers ample opportunity for choice and creativity within the contract parameters. Their product is the main satisfaction indicator for why the program remains popular.

Describe how AAA addresses food insecurity beyond Title III C-1 and C-2 services?

- \* The office is committed to addressing food insecurity in Mercer County. A significant partner in this effort is Trinity Cathedral in the West Ward section of Trenton. They host a specially planned Healthy Heart Farmer's Market that allows residents to come to the church to get their Farmer's Market checks, spend them onsite, have special screenings from local hospitals and receive a free meal. By

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## Priorities Update and Accomplishments

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partnering with them, we have opened access for many seniors who live in senior housing in the area who normally would be isolated from such offerings.

\* We use the Elder Economic Security Index numbers for describing hunger in Mercer County...the realistic spending for an elder living alone in Mercer County amounts to \$243 per month on food alone accounting for approximately 10.4% of the total amount spend making ends meet on an annual basis. Again, imagine living on the fixed income that so many are!

One initiative that attracts other cultures to the nutrition program?

\* By better understanding and being educated about other cultures, we have become more aware of the dietary choices of other cultures. Listening to them and understnading the why behind the food choices have opened opportunities to serve more appropriate meals to those wanting to participate. This awareness is expanding and as we learn more about the food preferences we are able to better provide for constituents.

\* Our caterer is most willing to support additional menus accoding to the ethnic and or religious requests. NJ4A and the State Nutrition Services will co-sponsor a food vendor show in early 2013 to learn from vendors how they are addressing these changing needs in their business plans to incorporate our ability to best serve this changing population.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

Caregivers; Grandparents Raising Grandchildren; Older Individuals with AD; Caretakers of t

**Priority Description:****Caregivers:**

- \* Grantees Greater Trenton Behavioral Health, St. Francis Medical Center's in-home caregiver education, Mercer Street Friends and Interfaith Caregivers offer tremendous outreach to caregivers and offer support groups, respite, in-home education and friendly visitor opportunities for caregivers.
- \* Contact's Telephone Reassurance Program is essential as a way to check in one someone on a daily basis to ensure well-being; this can be a life saver for caregivers, especially those living a distance.
- \* Hosted and will again in 2013 an Issues on Aging in the LGBT caregiving community.
- \* The OOA partners with the Mercer County Connection in Hamilton for many caregiver education programs from home health care assistance to dementia care to making the home safe to legal considerations when planning ahead.

**Grandparents Raising Grandchildren:**

- \* The Greater Trenton Behavioral Health program spearheads the education efforts in this area.
- \* The OOA participated in the earlier development of the Grandfamily Center in Trenton; Children's Home Society has put together this effort to assist the entire family and looks to the OOA for I&A purposes when working with the grandparent.

**Older Individuals with ADRD**

- \* Although our grantees see many of these folks in the community, the OOA receive multiple calls for information to support this concerns. Although primarily working with the caregiver, there are ongoing opportunities for those with ADRD to receive education about what is available to them from early detection information to social day care programming and support in legal and financial planning. The OOA director specializes in her understanding of dementia care and is resourceful to the Mercer County resident in this way. Every November is a Memory Screening Day whereby people can participate in learning about the normal processes of aging versus potential

## Priorities Update and Accomplishments

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cognitive changes.

Caretakers of older individuals with ADRD

\* This is the area that the Mercer County OOA has a special edge. Through a grant with the NJ State Aging Services and Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, Mercer County offered the Skills2Care program for caregivers of those with dementia/AD. The program pairs a caregiver with a trained occupational therapist who works on individualized skill building to help the caregiver cope with the changes associated with dementia. Successful interventions are created and practiced to assist the caregiver in being able to understand, respond and manage some of the challenging situations which they are confronted. The impact of this evidenced-based program asserts the caregivers positive approach to caregiver challenges and gives them a set of tools to use when the going gets rough. Through the program 60 caregivers were able to be helped. Mercer County will offer this program as a service through the AAA caregiver education offering and hopefully it will be a service that can be replicated throughout the other 20 counties.

\* A large number of those attending the support groups for caregivers in Mercer County are caring for those with dementia. Many are working adults children so offerings for support groups and education are scheduled in the evening.

\* The local Alzheimer's Association has a respite program and reimburses care for total of \$1,000 for a one-time occurrence. This assists caregivers in getting a taste of respite, a service desperately needed by caregivers. OOA refers people to this program and is invaluable to the caregivers.

\* The Director of the OOA was the dementia caregiver trainer for both the PACE program and the Interfaith Caregivers this year; it was an opportunity to be able to partner with organizations that have direct connection with the professional and paraprofessionals offering support to caregivers in the community.

\* Director of OOA is a facilitator for the Gerontology Certificate program at the local community college, specializing in caregiving.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

Emergency Preparedness

**Priority Description:**

How timely is this submission as Superstorm Sandy has just departed the northeast!

Level of Coordination with County OEM:

\*Direct involvement needs to be attained. Peripheral involvement occurs through our ADRC commitment as the Director for the Office for Disabilities is a County lead. Our Public Health department heads the OEM efforts and are in direct contact with OEM throughout any emergency. The OOA receives regular announcements through any emergency from the LINCOS email/telephone system. This affords the Office to be on top of the situation and allows us the ability to communicate with our grantees readily.

\* Register Ready needs to be reorganized and more readily used in Mercer County; this did not provide much support up to this point but we are placing this as an ADRC priority moving forward.

\* OOA staff participates in any drills that are county-wide.

\* Each department submitted a plan for emergency preparedness by determining what the needs are for an potential 2 week disaster. The recent storm allows us all to be more fully aware of the plans that worked and did not work.

\* Crucial to the OOA is the awareness of food and shelter insecurity post-disaster as well as what to do when there is a power outage over an extended period of time.

AAA's major activities carried out for emergencies in 2012:

\* Power outages post severe storms saw two senior housing buildings without power during the summer of 2012. The City mobilized their Emergency plans. County Human Services was coordinating any help that was needed in term of manpower. Calls were made to our services providers and they responded to the concerns by sending personnel to assist with tending to the seniors who were unable to leave their floors as elevators were without power.

\* A fire occurred in a senior high rise later in the summer and again the City mobilized their plan which called for evacuation. Many residents refused to go but those that were immediately impacted were placed elsewhere until able to return back to their apartments. This takes an incredible amount of coordination and

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cooperation.

\* The recent superstorm called Sandy was an in-your-face reminder how vulnerable we all are to a potential disaster by Mother Nature.

\*There was plentiful advance notice of the coming concerns and we were able to assist in getting the word out about preparation. Could we have done more? Absolutely.

\*During the storm communication became limited as power outages became the norm not the exception. This prompts other responses from the Emergency Operations procedures and protocols.

An extended period of time away from the office for those in County government did not interrupt any email capabilities and only a short period were the phones without service. All I&A calls were collected and responded to in a timely manner. Only concern is for when phones may have been out of order.

\*Housing concerns arose as a huge necessity. The ability to move the more compromised adults with multiple functional and cognitive concerns became a challenge for many. Many of the displaced had higher levels of needs than was expected when they arrived at comfort stations and the city shelter. When day turned into overnight accommodations were difficult to find.

\* Food availability was more easily accessible but not being fully aware their capabilities in emergencies to serve larger numbers of people needs to be developed.

\*CERT members offered their assistance at certain sites for additional hands on support for those attending.

\* The ability to open comfort stations county-wide was the most valuable provision for people of all ages. Some adult children dropped their parents at the comfort station while they could clean up after the storm. Having a heated spot for public access was important.

\* For the two days following the storm over 300 hot meals were served to Lawrence and Robbinsville.



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**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

ADRC

**Priority Description:**

Status of ADRC Quarterly Planning Committee: Although this is not a formal meeting in Mercer our quarterly Aging Network Meetings and quarterly grantees meetings allow us to update the ADRC process. As previously reported much of the 2012 was not a productive year in our moving forward with protocols. However, establishing relationships with the Board of Social Services (BOSS) and the disability offices is active and on-going. We do not have any formalized protocol but need to see that these are readily established. Internally, the OOA and the Office for Disabilities shares staff and there are some overlapping duties. We are utilizing staff to answer I&A calls, do the Community Screens and offer options counseling. Identified in the community are several of the stronger senior centers to partner with us for data exchange and options counseling. The unique development by a local not-for-profit places Mercer County in a position that is forcing us to develop a different business process - the Jewish Children and Family Services of Greater Mercer County has created a facsimile model of the ADRC and receives funding for the project from United Way. Their care management component drives those that enter through their doors and offers the same opportunities with those who have partnered with them to offer wrap-around services. The OOA will be working more closely with the United Aging and Disability Partnership (UADP) to develop protocol and see where the ADRC model can be materialized.

Internally we have designated staff to work separately on the FFP directed activities. The County is redesigning its ADRC personnel to further share the OOA and Office for Disabilities to handle and distinctively render I&A to the Older Americans Act recipients while being able to streamline others to processes that will ultimately move them to receive the nursing home level of care they need and receive the appropriate services according to need and financial security.

SAMS is fully functional in Mercer County; all providers report using SAMS and I&A staff within the office do as well. The Nutrition program is fully SAMS operational. Because of the SAMS product not being compatible with the BOSS data collection

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database, this presents a stumbling block for working together on these protocols.



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**Priority Type:**

County Specific Priorities-Nutrition

**Priority Description:**

Priority Objective:

To provide Mercer County older adults with comprehensive nutrition services, as set forth in the Minimum Standards for the Provision of Nutrition Services for the Elderly.

2012 Progress Update:

The provision of nutrition services throughout Mercer County is a key factor in supporting improved physical health and well being and promoting healthy lifestyles. With the assistance of State and Federally funded senior transportation services, frail, disabled, low income and minority older adults are provided the opportunity to congregate in a community setting and receive a daily nutritious hot meal. To assist those with limited incomes, the Mercer County Nutrition Program for the Elderly continued the nominal suggested meal donation rate of \$1.00. For this voluntary donation, seniors received a quality 1/3 RDA meal as well as socialization and recreation five days per week at one of twelve nutrition sites.

Mercer continues to redefine the focus of the Congregate Nutrition Program. The goal is to provide good nutrition and socialization to a more diverse aging population. The program is committed to serving older individuals with limited English proficiency, by incorporating cultural activities and holidays, as well as vegetarian meals and meals palatable to the cultural norms of multiple populations. The program is also seeking activities to encourage increased participation of the "baby boom" generation.

Mercer County enjoyed a boost in congregate meal attendees and meals served. We are meeting the expectations presented in our 2012 plans of a 5% increase at the Hamilton nutrition site and an 11% increase at the Lawrence site. Both the aforementioned sites are attracting more seniors as they are also offering activities that interest a larger base of potential participants. The partnership with the senior centers is so important. As activities reflect a changing aging population, so do the food

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varProgressSummary1 continued

choices available.

Health and wellness activities were the focus of 2012. As such, "Healthy Meal Day" was incorporated into the program. On this special day, a nutritionist visited a site and talked specifically about the meal served on that day. The speaker explained how meals can be healthy and delicious and provided hand outs on nutrition tips and a healthy and delicious recipe booklet. Increased participation has been noted on "Health Meal Days".

To ensure the utmost participation in the Farmers Market Voucher program, community events were held at Trinity Cathedral Church and the Trenton Farmers Market; senior centers, housing facilities and care managers also assisted in check dissemination. As of October 1, 2012, 3,200 seniors received a total of 12,800 vouchers worth \$20. We equalled the distribution for 2011. We are awaiting news about the redemption rate. This year we fostered a relationship with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to offer more benefits for seniors needing food. This turned out to be a great connection and opened the door for the SNAP personnel to reach out directly to those in need.

Home delivered meals continue to provide the necessary in-home nutritional support to help sustain vulnerable homebound seniors in their desire to live safely at home and reduce inappropriate or premature institutionalization.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

County specific priorities - Evidenced-based programming

**Priority Description:****Priority Objective:**

To foster the well-being of Mercer County older adults through the provision of funding to expand/support comprehensive evidence-based physical health disease prevention and health promotion services and senior mental health services.

**2012 Progress Update:**

In compliance with PM 2009-5, III-4, Title IIID disease prevention and health promotion funds have been directed to evidence based physical health education and promotion services. All programs fall into the categories recommended by the Administration on Aging: disease self-management, fall prevention, medication management, nutrition, and physical activity using evidence based programs. The 2012 approved Health EASE education programs provided by Henry J. Austin Health Center - Senior Health Promotion program include: Bone Up on Your Health - Fall Prevention and Osteoporosis Management; Keeping Up the Beat - Self Management Techniques for Cardiovascular Disease; and Serving Up Good Nutrition. Additional US Department of Health and Human Services - National Institute on Aging programs include; Aging Well Living Well - Exercise Program and Diabetes in Older People - A Disease You Can Manage.

The Senior Health Promotion program also partnered with the Senior Mental Health Program Coordinator to provide A Matter of Balance. The collaboration of the physical and mental health services addressed the psychological aspects associated with the fear of falling and the consequences of physical injuries.

Senior mental health support groups provided by Greater Trenton Behavioral Health provided Mercer County seniors with mental health education services. Education support groups included: Feeling Emotionally Healthy in the Golden Years, Laugh, Love, Live, Loss and Grief for Seniors, Memoir Writing, Reminiscence Therapy; as well as senior mental health education workgroups. 2012 education workgroups included: Fall Prevention, Mental Health and Aging: The Mind Body Connection, SPICES/ Physical

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Changes and Social Connections, Stress Reduction A Matter of Balance, Aging with a Chronic Mental Illness, Cognitive Function, Fall Prevention, Feeling Emotionally Healthy in the Golden Years, Gray Matters, Memoir Writing, Mood and Memory, Personal Safety, Recovering from Caregiving, Retirement I, Retirement II, Self Defense, and Stress Reduction.

Interfaith Caregivers offered the Healthy Bones program and are delighted with the enthusiasm and community involvement. This popular wellness program seeks to improve the balance, strength and socialization of caregivers and care receivers, while emphasizing the importance of exercise, nutrition, safety, drug therapy and lifestyle factors as they relate to osteoporosis.

The OOA joined in partnership with the RWJ Health and Wellness Center to participate with a resource table at the September 24th "Catch a Fall Before It Happens" falls prevention awareness day. 150 seniors participated in the event.

Skills2Care, the caregiver education program designed to assist caregivers along their dementia caregiving journey was completed as a study in Mercer County. Pairing a caregiver with a trained occupational therapist to assist in developing a tailored skill set, the caregiver receives one-on-one practice and support when dealing with persons with dementia. We now can roll this program out through our caregiver education taxonomy and through AAA services.

#### 2013 APC Intentions:

The approved evidence based health promotion programming will be provided throughout Mercer County. Any additional programming will be requested for approval as required by the Title IIID services policy. Mental health services will continued to be funded and services will be updated according to the mental health needs and requests identified by the program advisory council or by direct service requests.

**PROGRESS SUMMARY - ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REVISED PRIORITIES**

This section is the AAA's update on the progress made from the current Area Plan Contract grant year. Each of the OAA/SUA are addressed as instructed.

**Priority Type:**

Transportation

**Priority Description:****Priority Objective:**

Allocate Older American's Act funding to increase the availability of county-wide transportation and assisted transportation services; improving access to and coordination of transportation services utilized by older adults.

**2012 Progress Update:**

The Office on Aging continues to provide representation to the Mercer County Coalition for Coordinated Transportation. As such, the Coalition remains focused on meeting the transportation needs of Mercer's seniors, disabled and individuals with low-incomes. The NJ Find a Ride website, a Coalition project, assists those seeking transportation services, and the Office on Aging has been actively promoting the use of the website.

Federal Transit Administration - New Freedom grants were awarded to Coalition members, the Arc Mercer and the Greater Mercer TMA for a combined total of \$383,000.00. This funding is geared towards implementing projects to enhance the transportation options for individuals with mobility challenges. Transportation projects in Mercer County will meet the primary goals of the Coalition; increased efficiency, streamlined access for consumers and improved services. These goals can be attained through coordination, developing partnerships and sharing local services.

TRADE Transportation, a Coalition partner and AAA service provider, has seen ridership increase over the past year. In Mercer County, TRADE has documented requests for transportation to dialysis, therapy and other on-going appointments. These individuals are on a waiting list, because TRADE is at service capacity and is unable to accommodate the requests. Coordination will be vital in serving those on waiting lists. The major concern with transportation is the need is ever-increasing and the ability to fully accommodate is not there.

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Acknowledging the ongoing need for transportation services, the Office on Aging provides Title III and SSBG funding to Mercer County TRADE.

Title IIIB funding was also provided to Interfaith Caregivers, Trenton for volunteer assisted transportation services. Services target aging and disabled Mercer County residents who cannot access traditional transportation services due to limited mobility or limited access to appropriate services. To attract volunteers, those meeting the RSVP program requirements are referred for the additional insurance coverage benefits and mileage reimbursement; however Interfaith Caregivers, Trenton insurance also covers the volunteer drives and the mileage tax deductions are often more attractive to the volunteers than the RSVP benefits.

### 2013 APC Intentions:

Transportation remains a priority service in 2013-2014 as it ranked the number two unmet service need according to the results of the 20 Questions Needs Assessment. Additional funding shall be allocated to the active contracts of those service providers reporting waiting lists or those approaching a waiting list. The Office on Aging will continue to provide referrals to alternate transportation resources and the NJ Find a Ride website.